



Chief Reader Report on Student Responses

2025 AP[®] World History: Modern Set 2

Free-Response Questions

• Number of Students Scored	412,964		
• Number of Readers	2099		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	57,264	13.9
	4	137,959	33.4
	3	70,200	17.0
	2	109,484	26.5
	1	38,057	9.2
• Global Mean	3.16		

The following comments on the 2025 free-response questions for AP[®] World History: Modern were written by the Chief Reader, Craig Miller, Professor, Pennsylvania College of Technology. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

Short Answer Question 1

Task: Short Answer Question

Topic: Standage Tea Production in China

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
SAQ Part A	1	0.85
SAQ Part B	1	0.67
SAQ Part C	1	0.35
Overall Mean Score: 1.87		

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Students were expected to answer three questions based on a passage from a secondary source by Tom Standage regarding China and India's tea production and exports during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For part A, students were asked to identify an argument the author makes in the passage regarding tea production in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For part B, students were asked to describe a likely reason for the changes in the tea imports to Great Britain (more tea imported from India and less tea imported from China) outlined in the passage. For part C, students were asked to explain how an additional piece of evidence (to be provided by the student) would support a claim made by the author in the passage that China "descended into a chaotic period" during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The question addressed content covered primarily in Topics 6.2., 6.3., 6.4., 6.5., 7.1., and 8.4. of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

The responses were expected to demonstrate reading comprehension and a deeper understanding of how production costs influenced broader societal changes. The scoring rubric progressed in complexity from simply identifying (part A), to describing (part B), and finally to explaining (part C). Many responses failed to earn credit for part C because students listed relevant events or movements without explaining their significance or connection to "a chaotic period", which was essential for full credit.

Overall, responses demonstrated a general understanding of global processes, especially regarding the impact of trade across different world regions. Students were mostly able to engage with the required historical thinking skills, including causation and comparison, though the depth and sophistication varied. Stronger responses integrated content knowledge with analytical thinking, while weaker ones tended to rely on surface-level information.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

A recurring issue was incorrect periodization—students referenced events outside of the permitted time frame (1800 to 1950). For instance, the Boston Tea Party, the Great Leap Forward, and the Green Revolution were often incorrectly included. In contrast, appropriate events such as the Opium Wars, Taiping Rebellion, and the Sino-Japanese Wars were often provided. This highlights a gap in students' ability to accurately situate historical events within the correct chronological framework.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
“One additional piece of evidence that would support the author’s claim of China descending into a chaotic period would be the Tienamen Square Protest. The Tienamen Square Protest was a nonvioelent protest held by educated students in China who were protesting against China’s communist party in favor of a new Western government structure. This protest is important because it showed how China’s population was revolting against the government causing political instablity.” (The response did not earn the point for part C because the evidence is outside the time period.)	“The author’s claim that China descended into a chaotic period in the early 1900’s is backed up by the fact that Britian was selling opium to china, and the violence it produced. Chinese officials siezed a ship of opium owned by britian, which started the Opium Wars, which lead to the defeat of China and the Unequal Treaties, which gave western powers more trading ability and Spheres of influence in China. This started some chaos as the Boxer Rebellion took place, where Europeans and Chinese cristians were killed due to anti-Western sentiment largely caused by the devistating effects of opium.” (The response earns the point for part C because it accurately explains how events like the Opium Wars and Boxer Rebellion help support the author’s argument.)
“Communist leader Mao pushed for a reform called the Great Leap Forward modeled after the industrializing reformatioms in Russia during this time, though the plan did not last long as it caused mass starvation and decline among the population. This is evidence of the chaotic period described by the author as a result of China’s instability.” (The response did not earn the point for part C because the evidence is outside the time period.)	“China descended into a chaotic period because during the 1800s and 1900s, the Chinese couldn’t consolidate their power. Other powers like Britian and Japan split China up economically, which was named ‘spheres of influence.’ As a result, China’s economy was instable and their government was struggling to keep their legitimacy, and the lack of a ruler who seemed legit led to rebellions and the seeking of a revolution and new government.” (The response earned the point for part C because it accurately explains how spheres of influence help support the author’s argument.)

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

A primary area of concern is students’ difficulty with basic reading comprehension, particularly when identifying geographic roles (e.g., tea producers vs. consumers). Many responses did not follow the *identify*, *describe*, and *explain*, but simply identified for all three tasks.

Many responses demonstrated a lack of understanding of the economic implications of European imperialism, especially regarding industrialization and production. Students often lacked the knowledge to make meaningful connections between historical developments and global economic patterns.

Solutions to this could be varied but helping students to really look at the prompt and understand what it is asking. On the second point, I know economics and economic history is not the favorite aspect of history to most historians, but cause and effect are real. If prices go up on raw materials, that is going to be passed on to the consumer. If in this case, industrialization helps the cost of tea production go down in one area, that is going to drop the price of tea.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for an SAQ on tea production, imports to Britain, and China during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
 - Unit 6 (Consequences of Industrialization), Topics 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, and 6.5; Unit 7 (Global Conflict), Topic 7.1; Unit 8 (Cold War and Decolonization), Topic 8.4. All of these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering an SAQ—this is addressed in Practice Session 3 for 2024, Practice Sessions 2 and 6 for 2023, Review Session 6 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 from 2021.
 - AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include SAQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer an SAQ.
 - The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”
- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These Skills-Based Modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include handouts for students.
- The Online Teacher Community includes a library of resources provided by AP teachers.

Short Answer Question 2

Task: Short Answer Question

Topic: Padmore Marshall Plan for Africa

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
SAQ Part A	1	0.62
SAQ Part B	1	0.45
SAQ Part C	1	0.45
Overall Mean Score: 1.52		

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Students were expected to answer three questions based on a passage from a primary source—a 1956 essay by George Padmore on the topic of United States aid to Africa in the context of decolonization and the Cold War. For part A, students were asked to identify one reason United States officials would have been concerned about the spread of communism (mentioned in the first paragraph of the passage) at the time Padmore’s essay was written. For part B, students were asked to describe the historical situation that led to the establishment of European colonialism. For part C, students were asked to explain how Padmore’s essay reflects the political situation Africa during the second half of the twentieth century. The question addressed content covered primarily in Topics 6.2., 6.5., 8.2., 8.3., 8.4., 8.5., and 8.6. of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Overall, responses did well in identifying the global ideological struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, specifically regarding its impact in postcolonial Africa. Many did well in describing the historical situations that led to colonialism in Africa, as well as explaining the political situation in Africa after 1950.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Some responses struggled to demonstrate a clear understanding of causation, especially in part B, where they were asked to describe the situation that resulted in the “system of colonialism” mentioned in the passage. Instead, some responses described effects, rather than causes, of colonialism.

Some responses appeared overly reliant on the passage and utilized information from it without providing information or interpretation beyond the document.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
“One reason the United States was concerned about communism was because the author was a former communist.” (The response did not earn the point for part A because the response is too vague.)	“The United States was concerned about communism because of its Cold War ideological conflict with the Soviet Union, and fears that it would spread to nations around the world.”

	(The response earned the point for part A because it correctly identifies the fear of the spread of communism as a reason for U.S. concern.)
“One cause of colonialism was African nations seeking independence after World War II.” (The response did not earn the point for part B because independence was not a cause of colonialism.)	“One situation that led to colonialism was the Scramble for Africa, during which European nations conquered most of Africa to acquire raw materials for industry.” (The response earns the point for part B because it accurately describes the Scramble for Africa as a relevant historical situation.)

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Suggest reminding students not to rely exclusively on a provided source, and to remember the importance of identifying, describing, and explaining said source in a broader historical context, such as the Cold War or imperialism.

Also recommend emphasizing the importance of carefully reading prompts to minimize the risk of mistaking causes for effects, as seen in some responses to part

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for an SAQ on communism, the Cold War, and Africa during the twentieth century.
 - Unit 6 (Consequences of Industrialization), Topics 6.1 and 6.2; Unit 8 (Cold War and Decolonization), Topics 8.5, 8.6, and 8.9. All of these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering an SAQ—this is addressed in Practice Session 3 for 2024, Practice Sessions 2 and 6 for 2023, Review Session 6 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 from 2021.
 - AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include SAQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer an SAQ.
 - The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”

- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These Skills-Based Modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include handouts for students.
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Short Answer Question 3

Task: Short Answer Question

Topic: Military Technologies and Land-Based Empires, 1450 to 1750

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
SAQ Part A	1	0.78
SAQ Part B	1	0.82
SAQ Part C	1	0.71
Overall Mean Score: 2.26		

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Students were expected to answer three questions related to military and navigational technologies in the period before circa 1750 and their effects on empire building and/or economic change. For part A, students were asked to identify one development that contributed to the spread of gunpowder technologies prior to 1500. For part B, students were asked to explain how military technologies affected the development of land-based empires in the period circa 1450 to 1750. For part C, students were asked to explain how navigational technologies in the period circa 1450 to 1750 contributed to economic change. The question addressed content covered primarily in Topics 2.1., 2.3., 3.1., 3.2., 4.4., and 4.5. of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Most responses showed a strong knowledge of trade routes, empires of the period, and technologies, especially navigational.

Many responses that earned high scores had well-developed content and analysis in parts B and C.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

There were very few misconceptions seen in the student responses to this question. Generally, responses that failed to earn points either provided evidence that was outside the time period or did not provide evidence that was specific enough.

Responses that failed to provide specific evidence often presented information in generic or overarching categories—for example, they referred to trade in general as opposed to specific trade routes (Silk Roads, Indian Ocean Trade routes, etc.); landed-empires as opposed to Ottoman, Qing, etc.; or navigational technologies as opposed to compass, astrolabe, fluyt, etc.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
“Machine guns were a significant improvement in 1450 to 1750”	“One development that contributed to the spread of gunpowder technologies in the period before circa 1500 was the spread of knowledge along Silk Road. During the Pax Mongolica the Mongol Empire facilitated trade and interaction on the

(The response did not earn the point for part A because the technology identified is not in the time period.)	Silk Road, leading to knowledge spreading thorough Afro-Eurasia in trading centers like Kashgar and Samarkand. In doing so, knowledge of gunpowder spread and became popularized from its origins in China farther into Central Asia with the later Gunpowder Empires through the Silk Road..” (The response earned the point for part A because it accurately identifies the spread of knowledge along the the Silk Roads during the period of the Pax Mongolica as a development that contributed to the spread of gunpowder technology. The responses provides much more information than the minimum necessary to earn the point.)
• “The Columbian Exchange spread technology” (The response did not earn the point for part C because the the claim is too vague and does not explain either the connection between the Columbian Exchange and navigational technology or the role of navigational technologies in causing economic change in the period circa 1450 to 1750.)	• “One way navigational technologies contributted to economic change in the period circa 1450 to 1750 was through new maritime technological advancements allowing for trading posts empires. Western European countries like Spain and Portugal used caravels and fluyts, which were new ships for long-distance trade, along with lateen sails to make ships more manueverable. These techonolgies helped Portugal take the port of Goa in India and the Spice Islands and for Spain to establish colonies for silver mining and sugar production in Latin America and the Caribbean, which lead to Western European economic dominance as Britain and France followed into Africa and North America.” (The response earned the point for part Cbecause it accurately explains how advances in navigational technology led to economic change through the rise and spread of European overseas expansions. The response provides multiple examples of navigational technologies as well as of economic changes during the period circa 1450 to 1750.)

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Use specific examples as evidence! Short-answer questions often ask about broad categories of information, e.g., technologies, land-based empires, or areas of economic activity, but effective answers almost always include at least one specific example for each category.

Separate each part of the SAQ and make sure students focus on whether the question asks them to *identify*, *describe*, or *explain*. Remind students that it is almost always necessary to provide more information and reasoning for a describe or explain task than it is for an identify task.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for an SAQ on the spread of technologies and their impact on military and economic developments during the period pre-1500 and circa 1450 to 1750.
 - Unit 2 (Networks of Exchange), Topics 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, and 2.7; Unit 3 (Land-Based Empires), Topics 3.1 and 3.2. All of these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering an SAQ—this is addressed in Practice Session 3 for 2024, Practice Sessions 2 and 6 for 2023, Review Session 6 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 from 2021.
 - AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include SAQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer an SAQ.
 - The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”
- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These Skills-Based Modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include handouts for students.
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Short Answer Question 4

Task: Short Answer Question

Topic: Technologies and International Relations and Economic Activity, Twentieth Century

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
SAQ Part A	1	0.59
SAQ Part B	1	0.66
SAQ Part C	1	0.32
Overall Mean Score: 1.58		

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Students were expected to answer three questions related to the effects of different types of technology on political and economic developments during the twentieth century. For part A, students were asked to identify one technological development in communication or transportation during that period. For part B, students were asked to explain how nuclear technologies influenced international relations in the second half of the twentieth century. For part C, students were asked to explain how the spread of new technologies in the twentieth century contributed to increased economic activity. Students were free to choose the specific technologies (within the categories specified in each part of the question) on which they wished to focus their responses. The question addressed content covered primarily in Topics 7.7., 8.2., 8.3., 9.1., and 9.9. of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Overall, students did well in answering the three parts of the prompt. Most responses successfully identified a twentieth-century communication or transportation technology in part A and explained the effects of nuclear technologies on international relations in part B.

Although responses were less successful in explaining how technologies led to an increase in economic activity (part C), many did explain how automation and the use of computers in some industries, or advances in shipping or communications led to increases in economic activity during the twentieth century.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

The most common errors stemmed from chronological misconceptions, as many responses conflated the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and, for part B, demonstrated uncertainty as to when the second half of the twentieth century began. Technological developments such as the invention of the telegraph, railroads, and the steam engine were often incorrectly placed in the twentieth century. Even though the scoring rules were designed to give students a wide berth for minor chronological errors (especially given that there was often a lag between the invention/creation of a new technology and its commercialization or widespread acceptance), many responses failed to earn points because of gaps in the students' chronological knowledge.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
“One technological development was the development and improvement of railroads. It has a major impact by allowing other countries to be able to transport goods while also carrying loads of it and delivering it in a more faster and efficient way.” (The response did not earn the point for part A as the development of railroads pre-dates the twentieth century.)	“One technological development in communication and transportation in the 20th century is the radio. Many methods of communication and transportation were invented during this time, and the radio was one of the most prominent. Used in war and in day to day life, the radio was a very influential and life-changing technology.” (Radio was one of the technologies that students could use to earn the point for part A because, even though the earliest advances in radio technology were made in the late nineteenth century, it was only in the early twentieth century that radios became commercialized and widespread enough to have an impact on society. In this case, the response earned the point for part A because it accurately identifies not only radio technology but also some of its important uses during the twentieth century.)
“One nuclear technologies affect on international relations in the second half of the twentieth century in the bombing of pearl hgarbor, which was the Japanese bombing against the America because of they wanted to be recongnized as one of the mainpower and wanted control of the Pacific Ocean.” (The response did not earn the point for part B because it makes the Japanese bombing of Pearly Harbor is outside the chronological bounds of the task, and the bombing of Pearl Harbor did not involve nuclear weapons.)	“One way nuclear technologies affected international relations in the second half of the twentieth century is by creating global tensions. [...] Because of the sheer destruction that nuclear weapons could cause, there were constant threats to use them, as both sides faced the threat of the world being destroyed by these nuclear weapons. In particular, the Cuban Missile Crisis was the peak of this conflict; the USSR had supplied missiles to Cuba because the United States had been refusing to trade with them due to their communist-leaning policies. Because of this threat, the United States worked quickly to de-escalate the conflict peacefully so as not to face destruction, and so the world wouldn't end up being destroyed by nuclear weapons.” (The response earned the point for part B because, using a specific example, it explains how nuclear technologies affected the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.)

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Periodization/chronology remains the stumbling block to successfully answering many short-answer questions, including this one. Many responses referred to technologies that were outside the time periods specified in each part of the prompt. Incorporating more timeline exercises in classroom activities and formative assessments would prove quite helpful. Teachers should emphasize careful reading of each prompt, as each part of the question may be focused on a different period.

Additionally, students would benefit from teachers reinforcing that many SAQ tasks—particularly those that use “explain” as their task verb—usually require specific examples and explicit argumentation to reliably earn the point.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for an SAQ on technological developments in the twentieth century, and the effects of technologies on international relations and economic activity.
 - Unit 7 (Global Conflict), Topics 7.7; Unit 8 (Cold War and Decolonization), Topics 8.2 and 8.3; Unit 9 (Globalization), Topics 9.1 and 9.9. All of these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering an SAQ—this is addressed in Practice Session 3 for 2024, Practice Sessions 2 and 6 for 2023, Review Session 6 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 from 2021.
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Document-Based Question 1

Task: Document-Based Question

Topic: Industrialization and Opportunities and/or Challenges for Women, 1850 to 1950

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
Thesis	1	0.85
Contextualization	1	0.57
Evidence from the Documents	2	1.75
Evidence Beyond the Documents	1	0.30
Analysis and Reasoning: Sourcing	1	0.33
Analysis and Reasoning: Complex Understanding	1	0.25
Overall Mean Score:	4.05	

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

Responses to this question were expected to use the seven documents provided with the question, as well as students' outside historical knowledge to evaluate the extent to which the spread of industrialization provided women with new opportunities and/or challenges during the period circa 1850 to 1950. The question provided opportunities for students to demonstrate their mastery of Historical Thinking Skills 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED). While the question was focused primarily on the reasoning process of causation, it also provided students with opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of the reasoning process of continuity and change over time. The question covered content from multiple Topics in Units 5 and 6, primarily those dealing with economic and social responses to industrialization, society in the industrial age, economic imperialism, the spread of ideologies, and revolutions. The question also covered some content from Unit 9, in particular those dealing with calls for reform and responses after 1900 (Topic 9.5).

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Responses were generally successful in addressing the historical developments and processes referred to in the prompt and documents. Students were able to identify evidence to address the spread of industrialization and its impact on women circa 1850 to 1950. Many of the responses showed good familiarity with the course content covered by the question, especially with the topics in Unit 5 related to the social, gender, and class effects of industrialization.

A substantial majority of the responses successfully earned the thesis point. Commonly seen claims about the effect of industrialization on the lives of women included both opportunities—jobs, educational opportunities, formal and informal leadership roles—and challenges—continued economic dependence on men, low paying jobs and unequal pay, difficult working conditions, continued social demands and expectations concerning childcare and household management, etc.

Responses were also broadly successful in using the document to support their claims or arguments. Most responses demonstrated accurate understanding of the documents with minimal misinterpretations.

The most effective responses showed the ability to use the information provided in the documents and integrate it with outside knowledge. Even though many responses did not attempt to address all seven documents, those that did so usually were the most successful as they had the widest array of evidence and authorial perspectives from which to construct their arguments. The responses that earned the point for

complexity usually did so by constructing nuanced arguments that considered the diverse experiences of women during the process of industrialization—for example, by arguing that while some women were elevated to positions of leadership, many lower-class women suffered due to the nature of the work and their impoverished status.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Situating their arguments in an appropriate historical context was a challenge for many students. Responses often offered broad generalizations about gender inequalities without any specifics or a chronological time frame.

Responses often struggled to analyze elements of the sourcing of the documents. Many attempts at sourcing simply repeated information provided in the document source line. Other attempts at sourcing failed to explain how the sourcing information identified was relevant to an argument about the effects of industrialization on the lives of women in the period circa 1850 to 1950.

Somewhat surprisingly for such a relatively mainstream question topic, only about one third of all responses earned the point for evidence beyond the documents. Many responses did not provide any outside information at all; others provided evidence that was outside the time period.

A fair number of responses failed to earn the second evidence point, or the point for sourcing the documents, because they did not address all documents. Because the second evidence point can be earned by supporting an argument with evidence from at least four documents, responses that *only* addressed four documents left themselves no margin for error in case their argumentation for one of these four documents was incorrect or not well presented. Likewise, responses that attempted to earn the point for sourcing the document by analyzing the sourcing of the bare minimum of documents required (two) were often unsuccessful.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
“Before this time period, women generally werent allowed to work outside the home or do anything outside the home without a man present. (This attempt at contextualization is overgeneralized and historically incorrect.)	“During 1750-1900 many states had begun the process of industrialization. This caused the development of many factories and industries for mass production. It also changed the living conditions of many from rural villages to bustling urban cities. These factories needed workers, anyone they could get, and so it meant that the roles set in place previously were changing extremely fast.” (The statement provides an effective context for the argument developed later in the response by addressing the effects of industrialization on living conditions, urbanization, and rising demand for labor that necessitated changes in the “roles set in place previously.”)

• “In Document 1, the purpose was to show how some women came into authorital positions. The woman, Maria, was provided the opportuntiy to lead, as well as become more educated by those around her. This show how she could grow as a person and gain more knowledge from this power.” (Although the response frames this as a sourcing analysis of the purpose of Document 1, the statement merely summarizes the contents of the document without explaining how any element of the document’s sourcing influenced the argument’s perspective.)	• “Document 7 narrates this phonemnon [challenges for women] in South Africa during a time of apartheid, where black people were seperated from whites in most aspects, including in their ability to work and manage business. These restritions applied to all black people, regardlss of their gender, and thus excaerbate the challenges brought upon by industrialization for women on two different accounts; race <i>and</i> gender.” (This response successfully analyzes historical situation of the document to support an argument about the combined effects of industrialization and Apartheid in creating new challenges for Black South African women.)
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Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Students need frequent exposure to primary sources to build arguments and specific, targeted feedback on what was effective and ineffective in their responses. Emerging writers often need to see effective arguments so they can model the process in their own writing. Grouping students together in pairs or teams to work on crafting arguments based on sources can help students at varying skill levels as they practice writing extended responses. Students can also be provided with a smaller number of documents and be tasked with only creating an argument linking those documents to build practice at this skill before being provided with a full set of seven documents. One way that many more students earned the Complex Understanding point was by successfully using all 7 documents to support an argument or arguments addressing the prompt or by accurately providing the point of view, audience, purpose, or historical situation of the document.

Once students have progressed to writing full responses, feedback should be targeted toward the dimensions of the Document Based Question (DBQ) rubric—Thesis, Contextualization, Evidence, and Analysis and Reasoning. Teachers should also provide targeted discussions of the different types of Evidence points and the Sourcing and Complex Understanding score points. Teachers should provide feedback on the specific points of the rubric that were both earned and not earned with detailed explanations. Student responses should be annotated, much like the benchmark and training feedback samples, so that students can see exactly where these skills are demonstrated or where these skills need improvement in the actual response the student wrote. This type of feedback provides a much greater benefit than using a holistic scoring that rates student responses based on a generalized total score. The exact conditions of the AP Exam, such as timing, format, digital applications, etc., are not as important earlier in a school year, but should be modeled as students get closer to the AP Exam administration.

A gradual development model that builds skills individually, developing a claim, providing historical context, using a small number of documents in supporting an argument, identifying sourcing of documents, and attempting to provide complex analysis provides students with more pathways to success and helps to alleviate the stress and overwhelming feelings associated with completing the full DBQ task. A tiered teaching of these skills would help students to become more effective and competent writers.

Teachers should refrain from endorsing or encouraging strategies that seek to “game” the rubric or to earn the maximum number of points with a minimum amount of effort. We saw plenty of examples of DBQ responses that only used four documents, or only attempted sourcing analysis of two of the documents. In addition to not being conducive to student learning and historical thinking skill development, such strategies often fail to produce the desired result because they leave no margin for error or misinterpretation of the documents. Responses that used all seven documents and attempted sourcing of four or more documents generally had a much better chance of earning the rubric points, including the point for demonstrating complex understanding.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for a DBQ focused on the extent to which the spread of industrialization provided women with new opportunities and/or challenges during the period circa 1850 to 1950.
 - Content from the following units and topics focused on this prompt with regard to historical background, contextualization, and evidence beyond the documents: Unit 5 (Revolutions), Topics 5.1, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, and 5.9; Unit 6 (Consequences of Industrialization), Topic 6.5. All of these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering the DBQ—this is addressed in Practice Sessions 7 and 8 for 2024, Practice Sessions 4 and 8 for 2023, Review Session 8 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 for 2021.
 - AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include DBQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer a DBQ.
 - The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”
- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These Skills-Based Modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include handouts for students.
- The Online Teacher Community includes a library of resources provided by AP teachers.

Long Essay Question 2

Task: Long Essay Question

Topic: Columbian Exchange Leading to Demographic, Social, or Cultural Change, 1450 to 1750

	Max Points:	Mean Score:
Thesis	1	0.32
Contextualization	1	0.60
Evidence	2	1.50
Analysis and Reasoning	2	0.74
Overall Mean Score: 3.09		

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to measure students' ability to explain to what extent the transfers of the Columbian Exchange led to demographic, cultural, or social change across the Atlantic region during the period circa 1450 to 1750. Students were expected to present a historically defensible thesis, describe a historical context relevant to the prompt, use at least two specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt, use that evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt, use historical reasoning skills to frame or structure their argument, and demonstrate a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt. The question was primarily focused on content from Unit 4 the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED), including Topics 4.3., 4.4., and 4.5. The main course themes covered by the question were Humans and the Environment, Cultural Developments and Interactions, and Social Interactions and Organization.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Responses were generally successful in addressing the historical developments and processes referred to in the prompt. The majority of the responses showed that students have knowledge of the Columbian Exchange and are able to explain how the discovery of the New World fueled changes throughout the Atlantic region.

Many students used the groups of categories of effects listed in the introductory statement of the prompt to craft their theses and organize their essays, adding lines of reasoning and/or argumentation that addressed or explained specific demographic, cultural, or social effects of the Columbian Exchange.

Most responses successfully used evidence to support their arguments. Responses overwhelmingly addressed the population shifts in the Americas resulting from new crops, animals, the slave trade, as well as diseases. Shifts in culture were largely addressed through discussions of religious conversion to Christianity in the Americas, as well as the various syncretic religions that emerged. The new racial hierarchies in the Americas were the most commonly discussed social change, but many students also discussed the change in the role of women in West Africa due to the loss of so many men because of the Atlantic Slave Trade.

A high percentage of responses were successful in identifying context, mostly either by discussing the voyages of Christopher Columbus or the technological innovations that were utilized in order to pursue Spanish and Portuguese overseas exploration.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Responses who did not earn the thesis point most often did not establish a line of reasoning. Instead, they simply restated the prompt or made claims that were too vague.

Some responses addressed individual biological aspects of the Columbian exchange such as the translocations of various crops or diseases, but did not connect these developments to demographic, cultural, or social changes in the Atlantic world. This approach would sometimes earn the first evidence point, but was generally unsuccessful in earning the second evidence point or the point for historical reasoning.

Although most responses used the correct geographic and chronological frame required by the question, there were some out-of-period or out-of-region responses that discussed the Silk Road, Indian Ocean, or Trans-Saharan trade routes rather than focusing on the Atlantic region.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
“The transfer of ideas, people, animals, plants, food and disease majorly affected the demographic changes across the Atlantic region during this time period.” (The attempted thesis restates the prompt without establishing a line of reasoning.)	“The connection of the Old World to the New World created changes not only in the demographics of the Atlantic region, as seen through the decline of the indigenous populations in the Americas and the boom of populations in areas such as Europe, but social changes as well as seen as through new hierarchy systems in Latin America and forms of labor seen on plantations such as chattel slavery.” (This response establishes a line of reasoning by identifying four distinct impacts on demographics, society, and economic systems.)
“The Columbian Exchange was a trade deal between Europe and the Americas. the trade included the sharing of new foreign foods, animals, and diseases between the regions. New fruits, vegetables, and other crops were introduced to the Americas and Europe. Along with these new foods, there was also a large amount of cultural diffusion. How ever foreign diseases proved to be an issue, especially for the Americas.” (The response misidentifies the Columbian Exchange as a “trade deal,” and does not identify any specific crop, animal, disease, or piece of cultural diffusion that was part of the process.)	“Diseases, such as smallpox and malaria, were carried with the Europeans to the New World. Because the indigenous people of the Americas hadn’t developed immunities to such diseases, upwards of 90% of the natives succumbed to these diseases. This then led to the need for the Europeans to replace the natives with workers from Africa, fueling the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. This led to the mixing of Europeans, Indigenous Peoples, and Africans in the New World, fueling demographic changes.” (This response explains how the spread of disease into the New World led to several layers of historical change and uses several pieces of specific evidence—malaria, 90% population

	decline, the Transatlantic Slave Trade—to support the argument.)
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Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Ensure that students practice the skill of argumentation, incorporating the historical reasoning skills of the prompt. This prompt asks for “demographic, cultural, or social changes”; therefore, it would help students to use continuity/change to frame their essay (although many successful responses also discussed effects). Using the language of the prompt helps to ensure that students are answering the prompt.

Use the CED as a guide and roadmap for the course, helping students understand historical developments and processes; generally, students struggled with contextualization and understanding what was taking place beyond the location and period of the question.

Teachers should work with students on building their thesis, using the historical reasoning skills while ensuring that they are establishing a line of reasoning. Have students brainstorm at least 2–3 different arguments that can be made based upon the prompts. Those 2–3 arguments then can become the lines of reasoning for the thesis statement, which can later be used as the topic sentences for each body paragraph.

Teachers should continue to reinforce geography in class. While most students did demonstrate an understanding of what made up the “Atlantic region,” there were many students that misinterpreted this and, instead, focused exclusively on regions outside of Europe, West Africa and the Americas.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for an LEQ on the extent to which movements or transfers led to demographic, cultural, or social changes across the Atlantic region during the period circa 1450 to 1750.
 - Unit 4 (Transoceanic Encounters) Topics 4.1 through 4.8. All of these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering the LEQ—this is addressed in Practice Sessions 5 and 6 in 2024, Practice Sessions 3 and 7 for 2023, Review Session 7 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 for 2021.
 - AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include LEQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer an LEQ.
 - The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”
- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional

resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These Skills-Based Modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include student handouts.

- The Online Teacher Community includes a library of resources provided by AP teachers.

Long Essay Question 3

Task: Long Essay Question

Topic: Enlightenment and Movements for Political Change and/or Social Reform, 1750 to 1900

	Max Points:	Mean Score
Thesis	1	0.72
Contextualization	1	0.60
Evidence	2	1.29
Analysis and Reasoning	2	0.48
Overall Mean Score: 3.08		

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to measure students' ability to explain to what extent Enlightenment ideas encouraged movements for political change and/or social reform during the period circa 1750 to 1900. The question allowed students to choose whether to focus on political or social movements or both, and to pick any examples or case studies during the time period specified in the prompt. Students were expected to present a historically defensible thesis, describe a historical context relevant to the prompt, use at least two specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt, use that evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt, use historical reasoning skills to frame or structure their argument, and demonstrate a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt. The question was primarily focused on content from Unit 5 of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED), including Topics 5.1., 5.2., and 5.8. The main course themes covered by the question were Cultural Developments and Interactions, Governance, and Social Interactions and Organization.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Responses were generally successful in addressing the historical developments and processes referred to in the prompt. The majority of the responses demonstrated a good understanding Enlightenment thought and its influence on the political and (to a lesser extent) social reform movements.

The most frequently addressed movements for change were the various Atlantic Revolutions. Other movements for change addressed in the responses included the women's rights movement and the movement and the workers' rights movement.

The majority of the responses successfully earned the contextualization point, typically by situating the Enlightenment in longer-term intellectual and/or religious developments in Europe, such as the Scientific Revolution, the Protestant Reformation, and the rise of the Third Estate / bourgeoisie.

The points for evidence were relatively accessible, with many responses offering a fair amount of evidence and using that evidence to support their arguments. Commonly used pieces of evidence included various Enlightenment thinkers (Locke, Adam Smith, Voltaire, Rousseau, Olympe de Gouges, Mary Wollstonecraft) and persons or events connected with the Atlantic Revolutions.

The wording of the prompt allowed students to showcase a wide variety of content knowledge by selecting evidence from the broad categories of social reform and political change.

Although the point for demonstrating a complex understanding was only earned by a small minority of responses, one approach that successful responses took was to argue that, despite inspiring many movements

for political and social change, Enlightenment ideas also failed to challenge the status quo in other ways—most notably in preserving or not questioning male-dominated social norms and roles.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

A common problem among many responses was a failure to translate content knowledge that students have into an argument about the Enlightenment’s effects on revolutionary or reform movements. A number of responses were purely narrative, outlining the course of various revolutions, or listing Enlightenment philosophers and their main ideas.

Although responses demonstrated a reasonable understanding of the chronological and conceptual scope of the Enlightenment, there were some off-topic and responses. Some of these discussed events from the course of the Protestant Reformation. Other responses incorrectly identified various unrelated nineteenth-century developments such as Social Darwinism or the Sepoy Rebellion as Enlightenment movements.

A fairly small number of responses discussed political or social reform from outside the time period specified in the prompt, including Gandhi’s leadership of the Indian independence movement or Martin Luther King, Jr.’s leadership in the United States Civil Rights movement. Some of the responses in this category appeared to confuse the Enlightenment with any “enlightened” or progressive political movement.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
“Enlightenment ideas such as Social darwinism and marxism led to the French Revolution (1896) and the Haitian revolution (1888).” (This response demonstrates misconceptions about what historical developments are part of the Enlightenment as well as significant chronological errors concerning the French and Haitian Revolutions.)	“The ideas of Enlightenment philosopher John Locke included the idea of natural rights of life, liberty, and property that cannot be taken by any government, even strong monarchies like Britain. After hearing about the ideas of Enlightenment, the Americans became inspired to declare their own independence in the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and also diligently won the Revolutionary War to gain official independence from Britain. Once forming the democratic republic of what the United States of America is today, they also drew inspiration from Enlightenment thinker Baron de Montesquieu on how power should be divided in checks and balances; they implemented this idea through the checks and balances in their own government of different branches and a president (not dictator) to ensure that their government would not be as oppressive as the British which limited their rights and give any branch too much power. They also used the ideas of Beccaria (Enlightenment philosopher) on how torture should be abolished and the rights of prisoners, applying this to their Bill of Rights”

	(This response uses many specific examples of Enlightenment ideas and their application in the context of the American Revolution to support an argument.)
“Anti-colonialist movements helped people reshape political and social policies. One example of this is in Haiti, when the Haitian people revolted and fought against colonialism. They won the war, helping them secure their independence and reform their state to fit their natural freedoms.” (Despite the passing reference to “natural freedoms,” the response does not connect the Haitian Revolution to Enlightenment ideas or address the underlying economic and social factors that led to the Haitian Revolution.)	“Women participated greatly in the revolution like in the September March but were not represented with more political rights, showing some counterbalance to the ideas of Enlightenment philosophes like Mary Wollstonecraft wanting more suffrage and rights for women in marriage as well. Due to this, Olympe de Gouges drafted the Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen, partly mocking/modeled after the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen from the French Revolution. It was aimed to highlight how the French Revolution was hypocritical in its core motives of equality of all people because it was not giving those supposed rights for all people to oppressed groups like women. So, in this way, the Enlightenment did not entirely lead to social reform, because it represents a continuity in how women were degraded and treated as less than men in society to the point where their rights were not even considered when forming a democracy.” (The response provides a nuanced argument about the persistence of patriarchal gender norms despite the Enlightenment’s promotion of equality.)

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Ensure that students get opportunities to practice writing argumentative essays. The historical facts in an LEQ response need to be deployed to support an argument to maximize the number of points that students can earn. Many responses that demonstrated some content knowledge about Enlightenment thought and/or nineteenth-century revolutionary or reform movements, but failed to show how these pieces of content knowledge connected together in cause-and-effect historical connections.

Teachers should work with students on building their thesis, using the historical reasoning skills while ensuring that they are establishing a line of reasoning. Have students brainstorm at least 2–3 different arguments that can be made based upon the prompts. Those 2–3 arguments then can become the lines of reasoning for the thesis statement, which can later be used as the topic sentences for each body paragraph.

Chronological knowledge and knowledge of historical periodization remains essential for student success. Higher quality responses typically demonstrated solid awareness of the chronology of the Enlightenment and

the basic sequence of the Atlantic revolutions and nineteenth-century reform movements. Practicing with timelines in low-stakes formative assessments during the school year could provide helpful repetition and reinforcement of chronological skills.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for an LEQ on the extent to which Enlightenment ideas encouraged movements for political change and/or social reform during the period circa 1750 to 1900.
 - Unit 5 (Revolutions), Topics 5.1, 5.2, and 5.8. All of these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering the LEQ—this is addressed in Practice Sessions 5 and 6 in 2024, Practice Sessions 3 and 7 for 2023, Review Session 7 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 for 2021.
 - AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include LEQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer an LEQ.
 - The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”
- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These Skills-Based Modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include handouts for students.
- The Online Teacher Community includes a library of resources provided by AP teachers.

Long Essay Question 4

Task: Long Essay Question

Topic: Nationalism as a Factor in Global Conflict, Twentieth Century

	Max Points:	Mean Score
Thesis	1	0.65
Contextualization	1	0.45
Evidence	2	1.54
Analysis and Reasoning	2	0.74
Overall Mean Score: 3.38		

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to measure students' ability to explain to what extent nationalism was the most important factor contributing to global conflict during the twentieth century. The question allowed students to argue against the premise in the prompt; in other words, students could argue that other factors (religion, militarism, fascism, etc.) were more important in leading to global conflict than nationalism. Students were expected to present a historically defensible thesis, describe a historical context relevant to the prompt, use at least two specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt, use that evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt, use historical reasoning skills to frame or structure their argument, and demonstrate a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt. The question was primarily focused on content from Units 7 and 8 of the AP World History: Modern Course and Exam Description (CED), including Topics 7.2., 7.3., 7.5., 7.6., 7.7., 7.8., 8.2., 8.3., 8.5., and 8.6. The main course themes covered by the question were Governance and Cultural Developments and Interactions.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Responses generally demonstrated good understanding of global conflict in the twentieth century, and the causal role related to nationalism in these conflicts. Most responses argued that nationalism was the main cause or one of the main causes of the two World Wars, and the conflicts that accompanied decolonization in the second half of the century. Teachers are clearly instructing students about the ideologies and major conflicts of the twentieth century as outlined in the Course and Exam Description.

Responses that argued that other developments or factors were more important than or just as important as nationalism in causing global conflict often discussed the role of ideological conflicts between communism and capitalism.

Many of the highest scoring, complex responses addressed combinations of ideologies as causes for global conflicts and provided multiple supporting examples in response to their arguments. Such responses often discussed nationalism as both a unifying force (for instance, the use of nationalism to unify people in decolonization conflicts in Vietnam, Korea, and India) and a dividing force (for instance as leading to the collapse of Yugoslavia or to the genocide in Rwanda).

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Responses generally struggled to successfully contextualize their arguments. Many attempts at contextualization simply offered various definitions of nationalism or vaguely alluded to historical developments preceding the twentieth century without connecting them to nationalism or its effects. This was

somewhat surprising as the prompt appeared to offer many opportunities for students to select a suitable historical backdrop to their arguments—for example the collapse of multiethnic empires, the Versailles Treaty, the Great Depression, the Bolshevik Revolution, the rise of totalitarian regimes in Italy, Germany, and Japan, and many others.

Many responses appeared to treat the prompt as asking only about nationalism’s role in global conflict, rather than evaluating whether it was the most important factor. Such responses missed an opportunity to engage with the evaluative element of the prompt and to compare the role of nationalism to that of other factors (imperialism, economic tensions, non-nationalist ideologies), which is crucial for demonstrating historical reasoning (especially for the complex understanding point).

A considerable number of responses listed relevant evidence (e.g., “Hitler used German nationalism in WWII”) but did not explain how the evidence supported an argument about the role of nationalism as a factor in causing global conflicts.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
“The holocaust was a major genocide that was lead by Adolf Hitler. He created Nazi Germany, making everyone believe that Germans are better than everyone else. He sent Jews to concentration camps, killing over 6 million Jews through deadly gas chambers and hard labor. This contibuted to nationalism because of Hitler believing that Jews weren’t good enough compared to the Germans.” (Although the response provides some valid basic evidence about the Holocaust, that evidence is not connected to a plausible argument about the role of nationalism as a factor in global conflict.)	“After WWI, Germany saw a great loss in territory due to the creation of the Treaty of Versailles. This treaty worked to redistributed Germany’s land as well as setting limitations on what the German government can do. With this growing national embarrassment, a leader known as Adolf Hitler rose to power as he gained the support of millions experiencing this national embarrassement. Through acts of propaganda, he was able to install an overwhelming sense of nationalism in the people of Germany leading to the devastating WWII. This sense of nationalism portrayed that the white German population was elite to any other race. This led to Hitler’s justification of eradicating all of the Jewish population. Again, through acts of propaganda or spreading a false narrative, the people of Germany gave their unconditional support leading to the loss of millions in the second world war. So, because of the nationalism installed by Adolf Hitler to the people of Germany, a great global conflict arose, being known as WWII.” (This response uses multiple pieces of relevant evidence to support the argument that Hitler used German nationalism to create global conflicts.)
“Nationalism was the most important factor contributiong to global conflict during the cold	“The broader historical context for this period involves the maturation of the nation-state

war. Nationalism is defined by the feeling that your country is the best, or greater than someone else's. When a government and its citizens are nationalists, they will do many things to uphold those feelings, for example, trying to outperform another country socially, economically, or technologically.” (The attempted contextualization is definitional rather than historical.)	system in the 19th century, where national identity became increasingly central to political legitimacy and popular consciousness. This was compounded by industrialization, which fueled economic competition for resources and markets, leading to imperialism. Nationalism provided the ideological superstructure for these ambitions, framing colonial expansion not merely as economic necessity but as a matter of national pride and mission. This environment, saturated with nationalistic sentiment, created a fertile ground for conflict, where diplomatic incidents could rapidly escalate due to inflamed public opinion and the perceived imperatives of national honor.” (This is a sophisticated explanation of the historical context of the nineteenth century, in which the rise of the nation-state, industrialization, and imperialism created an environment that could lead to conflicts.)
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Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?

Success on the LEQ tasks often depends on the students' ability to sort and compartmentalize their factual knowledge and to associate the facts accurately with terms, themes, or processes. The responses showed that many students struggled to define or historicize nationalism—for example many responses treated nationalism as a matter of collective pride or ego. Teachers should dedicate further instructional and assessment resources to explaining the many different historical flavors of nationalism, e.g., civic vs. ethnic, fascist vs. anti-colonial, unifying vs. divisive, etc. Use case studies (e.g., Nazi Germany, Vietnam, India, Yugoslavia) to show how nationalism operated differently across contexts. Encourage students to differentiate nationalism from related ideologies like imperialism, communism, or fascism. Emphasize that nationalism is an ideology that builds on a historically constructed collective identity, rather than an emotionally or psychologically universal trait.

Teachers should work with students on building their thesis, using the historical reasoning skills while ensuring that they are establishing a line of reasoning. Have students brainstorm at least 2–3 different arguments that can be made based upon the prompts. Those 2–3 arguments then can become the lines of reasoning for the thesis statement, which can later be used as the topic sentences for each body paragraph.

Chronology, chronology, chronology! The relatively low percentage of responses that successfully earned the contextualization point can be explained in large part by students' poor command of chronological reasoning and their lack of awareness of the nineteenth-century roots of nationalism and its relationship to the standardization of languages, universal education, creation of national print cultures, etc.

Prepare students to engage more fully with the evaluative aspect of the “extent-to-which” LEQ prompts. Practice thesis construction that explicitly evaluates the significance of one cause or effect over others, for example, ““While factor A played a role, factor B was ultimately more significant because” or “Although multiple causes contributed, factor A was the most/least significant due to” and adds an explanation.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on “Developing the Historical Thinking Skills and Reasoning Processes” on pages 180–191. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- The following resources are available in AP Classroom to provide instructional support for an LEQ on the extent to which nationalism was the most important factor contributing to global conflict during the twentieth century.
 - Unit 7 (Global Conflict), Topics 7.2, 7.3, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, and 7.8; Unit 8 (Cold War and Decolonization, Topics 8.2, 8.3, 8.5 8.6, and 8.9. All of these topics include resources, such as AP Daily videos and topic questions that serve as formative assessment tools.
 - AP Classroom contains AP Exam On-Demand Review videos for 2024, 2023, 2022 and 2021 that have helpful information for students that review not only content, but skills specifically used for answering the LEQ—this is addressed in Practice Sessions 5 and 6 in 2024, Practice Sessions 3 and 7 for 2023, Review Session 7 for 2022, and Review Sessions 4 and 8 for 2021.
 - AP Classroom has Topic Questions and Personal Progress Checks for each unit that include LEQs and scoring guidelines that will allow students to practice the required skills needed to successfully answer an LEQ.
 - The Question Bank within AP Classroom contains examples of AP exam questions, both MCQs and FRQs, that can be used to assess student understanding and allow for further practice of the required skills. These skills can be selected in the “Skill Category and Skill” tab located within the Question Bank tab/All Questions. Teachers can also search by “Unit and Topic,” “Learning Objective,” or “Thematic Focus.”
- Additionally, AP Classroom contains resources under the Course Guide/Overview/Teacher Resources/More Resources/Professional Learning tab that includes videos and other instructional resources to provide strategies for teaching and assessing course content and skills. These Skills-Based Modules focus on teaching analysis of primary and secondary sources, the skills of argument development, contextualization, comparison, continuity, and change and include handouts for students.
- The Online Teacher Community includes a library of resources provided by AP teachers.